



Telearuba: Aruba's original TV station is back on the air, Pa Un y Tur!

On Friday morning a resurrected Channel 13, Aruba's national TV station was proudly pronounced back on the air during a grand opening reception for the press, local dignitaries, and potential advertisers. In the enlarged and refurbished main studio spectators were welcomed by Director of Telearuba, Robert Kelly, Prime Minister and Minister of Telecommunications Nelson Oduber, and the Director of SETAR, Roland Croes. In his address, Prime Minister Oduber stressed the need for a national station with an emphasis on not only entertainment, but also providing programming centered on Aruban life, culture, and local news.

Since its inception in 1963 and until ten years ago and the advent of cable and ATV, Telearuba was the island's only television station, broadcasting from 4 p.m. in the afternoon until 12 p.m. at night. Subsidized by the government, programming has usually been dominated by various aspects of Aruban life. With the advent of cable TV and the proliferation of satellite dishes and subscription television, the station fell into "hard times."

After the purchase of the station by SETAR, N.V., Aruba's Telecommunications Company last year, a complete refurbishment of the facility and equipment was begun, proving a more extensive undertaking than was anticipated. At a cost of eight million florins the facility at Balashi has been updated and upgraded to the latest equipment, a vigorous, energetic staff put in place, and new and popular programming in Papiamentu, English, Spanish and Dutch have been added to the schedule.

After a brief word by Director of SETAR, Roland Croes, the audience was treated to a film tracing the history and evolution of Telearuba into the Canal 13 of today, modern and dynamic. After that, a preview of future programming, containing some whiz-bang graphics by Juan Torres of Animagics, gave a sense of the more dynamic image of the revitalized station.

"The Sopranos" and "American Idol" are popular English language programs that will enliven nighttime programming, plus shows that have wide appeal like "World Wrestling Entertainment" and "X-treme Sports." "TechWatch" will report on the latest technological advances impacting our society, and comedy classics such as "Mr. Bean" and "Benny Hill" will fill in the nighttime schedule. Programmers are not forgetting the ever-important soap operas, or popular novellas, beginning with "Las Noches de Luciana;" in Spanish, which will be aired for the addicted. Also in Spanish is the Argentine program "Mysterio Y Milagros" or "Miracles" exploring the inexplicable but wonderful.

Afternoon programming will be devoted to entertaining and educational programming for children and youth.

These programs are to provide a wide viewing audience, but the purpose of Telearuba is to be an Aruban station for the Arubian people, so the bulk of the programming will be centered around culture, sports, events and Aruban life. Programs like "Nos Grandinan, Nos Tesoronan;" "Our Elders, Our Treasure" hosted by former Director of Telearuba, Dimitri Maduro, will focus on the worthy aspects of our island life and the accomplishments of the islands elderly community.

Poentje Castro will host “Un Dia den Bida”; “A Day in the Life;” about events and personalities of the island, and Robby Schouten will bring back the ever-popular “Leu Foi Cas:” “Far From Home;” about the adventures of Arubians out in the wide world. Of particular interest to young people will be programs about the latest in style, fashion, clubs, activities, and “Rib’untrip” hosted by Inro Kelboom about the radical, controversial and “what’s happening” in nightlife.

The News Department of Telearuba is where management plans to place the brunt of programming, providing live coverage of sporting events, important news events and staffed with active and aggressive reporters that will seek out the complete story.

It was a very exciting presentation followed by a brunch and tour of the beautiful new facilities. Guests had been greeted by a living a sculpture symbolizing the classic Kwihi tree logo of Telearuba by artist Carmen Geerman on the way in, and were bid adieu by models painted the Red, Silver, and Blue of the sleekly redesigned logo going out.

The newly revitalize Canal 13 will be a very welcome change from the only other two public access stations from Venezuela, which are totally in Spanish. Aruba is now an island with a population of 130,000 and needs a station that is focused on island news and events, that showcases all aspects of Aruban life, and is a station “For one and all!”